Tim Haddock
IN THE PADDOCK

Staudinger celebrates birthday in victory lane

Saugus High graduate Aaron Staudinger celebrated his 23rd birthday in victory lane at Kern County Raceway Saturday night, winning the Pro Stock main event at the Rosamond race track.

The Stevenson Ranch resident blew away a field of Pro Stock veterans, Mike Bush of North Hills, Rich Crow of Simi Valley and Greg Bratchie of Lancaster to name a few.

Kevin Wood of Saugus, the Pro Stock points leader who had won three races in a row coming into Saturday night's races, was fifth.

Staudinger added eight extra points to his championship hunt by having the fastest qualifying time of 15.555 seconds and was 29 points behind Wood before the race started.

"I kept crashing into the walls my first three races out here, but people believed in me and stuck by me and here we are," Staudinger said.

Crow, a regular at Saugus Speedway before it closed three years ago, won the trophy dash. Newhall's Steve Bennett won the "B" main event.

Super Mini Cup cars, quarter-scale Winston Cup replicas with Honda engines, made their season debut. Turlock's Larry Hoover was running in first with a ½-lap lead before he crashed in traffic and Brian Bettencourt of Modesto was awarded the victory.

Larry Mefford of Lancaster won the Pure Street Stock main event, Bruce Gallion of Lancaster won the Grand American V-8 Modified main and Gary Ebeling won the 1-4 Modified.

The next races at Kern County Raceway are scheduled for Saturday with the Late Models, KCRazy 8s, Grand American V-8 Modifieds, Mini Stocks and Back Seat Drivers. Pit gates open at 2 p.m., while spectator gates open at 4 p.m.

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The NASCAR Winston West Series makes its next stop in Sin City, Las Vegas Motor Speedway, for the Cactus Clash Saturday.

This will be the first 100-lap event run at Las Vegas Motor Speedway on the Winston West Series. Jason Schrader is Las Vegas' one-lap record holder at 158.884 mph set Nov. 2, 1996 in a Chevrolet.

Saugus High graduate Sean Woodside is among four West Series drivers who have won the pole position for races. The other three are Butch Gilliland, Gary Smith and Gary Collins.

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